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ABSTRACT

The unique approach of the African American Leadership Institute (AALI) to increasing the well-being of the African American community is described. The AALI was founded in 1990 by Metropolitan State College of Denver (Colorado) and the Urban League of Denver in the belief that all members of society should have an equal opportunity to pursue their goals and aspirations. To date, the AALI has graduated 85 people from its program, which consists of once-a-month seminars from October through June. With the participation and interaction of Institute facilitators, presenters, and the developing leaders themselves, topics that reflect current community issues are discussed. An outdoor adventure activity is the culmination of the program format. Each class must then work on a project that benefits the African American community. Participants are people with a vested interest in the African American community, aged at least 25, with personal attributes that enhance the overall diversity of the class and program. Corporations and organizations are encouraged to pay the tuition for employees and associates they sponsor. Three hours of college credit is available to eligible participants at a cost above the \$850 program fee. (AALI brochure included.) (SLD)

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**Presentation Summary of The African American Leadership Institute
at the 9th Annual National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in
Higher Education**

Introduction

The African American Leadership Institute (AALI) was co-founded in the spring of 1990 by Metropolitan State College of Denver, the nation's largest undergraduate-only college, and the Urban League of Denver. Metropolitan State College of Denver, which is the primary sponsor of AALI, has the distinction of educating more Coloradans than any institution of higher learning in the state. It is located in downtown Denver and is committed as an urban institution to serve and educate the local community.

AALI was started from the belief that all members of our society should have an equal opportunity to pursue their goals and aspirations. Fundamental to that belief is the inclusion of African Americans into the economic and political mainstream so that they may reap the benefits which our community offers to those who are willing to work for them.

As an extension of the commitment to that goal, AALI provides a unique approach to the particular problems and concerns of African Americans in the Denver metropolitan area. By encouraging the coordination, cooperation, and efforts of selected organizations and persons, it works to increase the industrial, economic, social, educational, and spiritual well being of the African American community. To date, the institute has graduated 85 persons from its program.

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Empowerment Through Leadership

It is a contention of AALI that the greater the role one plays within his/her environment, the greater will be the opportunities and benefits to be realized. For this reason, the empowerment of African Americans through leadership is critical. The need for the development of such leadership was recognized and undertaken by sound planning and strategies. Hence, three underlying tenets became the core philosophies of the program. They are as follows:

- * To identify, motivate, and train future community leaders.
- * To acquaint those individuals with the problems and needs of the community while investigating alternative solutions.
- * To create an opportunity for those individuals to join together and exchange ideas with current leaders for the purpose of networking for national, state, and local community improvements.

The Program

AALI's leadership program begins each year during the month of October and continues through the month of June. One-day seminars are conducted the third Friday of each month with participation and interaction among facilitators, presenters, and developing leaders (class students). Topics which reflect current community issues, include regional business and economics, local and state

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government, education, health care, human services, art, and cultural affairs. The program format entails lectures, panel discussions, field trips, and study groups culminated by a two and a half day outdoor adventure activity. After graduating from the institute, each class must work together on a project that will have a positive impact on the African American community.

Selection of Participants

AALI seeks to identify individuals in the Denver metropolitan community who possess a strong desire to positively impact the African American community through the development of their leadership potential. Each year, the governing board of the institute reviews the recommendations of the selection committee and admits a class of not more than 25 persons who on a competitive basis meet the following criteria:

- * Minimum age of 25.
- * A vested interest in the African American community.
- * Personal attributes which enhance the overall diversity of the class and program.

Tuition and Scholarships

Tuition for the program is \$850. Corporations and organizations are encouraged to sponsor their respective employees and associates

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who participate in the institute's program. AALI makes available a limited number of partial scholarships for non-sponsored participants. Three hours of college credit is available to eligible participants at an additional cost.

Enclosed you will find a brochure and other current data reflecting some of AALI's accomplishments.